

## Onomastic signs and language transformation (based on the Uzbek language material)

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**Abstract:** The essence of language is that it is the most effective means of communication in human society. Such a special “severity” of the language function requires that the elements of the language system must also have universal properties that are able to express and convey information. Therefore, the structure and orderliness of the language system is the basis for the transmission of information through semiotic characters. The transition of common nouns into the number of proper names and, in connection with this transfer, the loss and acquisition of old and new linguistic (semiotic) features is a clear example of the permanence of changes in a linguistic sign. The origin of toponyms and anthroponyms from among ordinary language signs is associated with the transition of common nouns into the category of proper names. When converting proper nouns into common nouns, there is a saving in linguistic means - one word denotes a class of homogeneous objects.

**Keywords:** language system, transformation, language sign, toponyms, anthroponyms, common nouns, proper nouns.

### Introduction

The essence of language lies in its role as the most effective means of communication for human society. This unique “weight” of the function of language requires that elements of the linguistic system must also possess universal properties capable of conveying and transmitting information. Therefore, the structure and order of the language system form the basis for transmitting information through semiotic signs. The existence of the language system is conditioned by the fact that its elements form new structures with corresponding meanings through their relations with each other. A structure without elements does not exist; it does not arise from nothing. However, for study purposes, the structure can be abstracted from its elements.

The existence of internal interconnections between elements of language has been recognized by linguists since ancient times. The “organism” of language, as well as the interconnection and interdependence of linguistic units and levels, was discussed by the founder of theoretical linguistics, Wilhelm von Humboldt. The heterogeneity of linguistic units and the description of the “organism” of language with its inherent paradigms were well defined by comparativists and structuralists of the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, the assertion that language is a system of signs and the idea of the need to study the internal structure of this system belong to Ferdinand de Saussure. “Language is a system, all elements of which form a whole, and the significance of one element stems only from the simultaneous presence of others,” wrote Ferdinand de Saussure [4, 147].

For a long time, an important question for linguistics has been the study of the mechanism of transforming various linguistic elements into onomastic signs, including toponyms and anthroponyms. In turn, this problem is closely related to the transformation of common nouns into proper names. The transition of common nouns to proper names and, with this transfer, the loss and acquisition of old and new linguistic (semiotic) features is a clear example of the permanency of changes in the linguistic sign.

Modern linguistics has established the following points about the transformation of common nouns into proper names:

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1. Proper names arise based on common nouns, i.e., a proper name is a secondary name for a given object that complements and specifies the primary, common name and serves to distinguish known similar objects from one another [5, 25]. If a given object has a common name, it does not necessarily also have a proper name. However, if a given object has a proper name, it must also have a common name. A proper name is intended to serve as an additional identifier and specifier for common names, for example, poet/translator/publisher Erkin Vohidov.
2. Proper names, being neutral signs (elements) in terms of meaning, do not reveal any characteristics or properties of the object they denote: “They (proper names) designate an object without attributing any properties to it” [2]. Additionally, “...the geographical names familiar to us, like other proper names, do not reflect any or almost no properties of the named objects” [5, 23]. Accordingly, the purpose of proper names is to name and identify rather than to provide a description.
3. The choice of names is different for common nouns and onomastics. A common noun is selected from a set of synonyms, mainly for stylistic purposes (to convey the author’s intention or to avoid repetition). A proper name is chosen from known names or created anew. The processes of appellativization of proper names (toponyms and anthroponyms) and onymization of common nouns show that there is constant interaction between common and proper names in the language. If the individuality of the named object becomes unclear, there is a tendency for a proper name to transition to a common noun (in the language in general or in a given speech situation). In such a case, one can speak of the appellativization of a proper name, its deonymization.
4. The opposite process also occurs in language. If an object named with a common noun becomes definite and specific, the likelihood of its transition to a proper name increases. This transition is called onymization. In most cases, the basis of onymization and appellativization lies in semantic derivation. Appellativization is observed if: a) the denotation of the proper name becomes well-known to all members of a specific language collective; b) the link between the name and a specific denotation is disrupted and becomes typical for many objects that resemble each other in some way, such as settlements. By breaking with one concept, words establish a firm logical connection with other concepts. To establish such a connection, a proper name must acquire a certain degree of intellectual information. The saturation of a proper name with such information leads to its gradual appellativization [6]. This process can occur naturally (fairly slowly) or artificially.
5. When proper names transition to common nouns or vice versa, typical object-word associations are disrupted: a proper name gains a broader meaning, losing specificity, while a common name narrows in meaning, losing vagueness in conceptual associations. The origin of nicknames is related to the transition of common nouns to proper names. When proper names transition to common nouns, there is a conservation of linguistic resources—one word designates a class of similar objects [3]. As can be seen, generalization and individualization constitute the main difference determining the specificity of common and proper names. This difference is found in semantics and concerns the essence and nature of meaning, defining the difference in the volume and structure of their lexical meaning. Through appellatives, the primary semantic function—generalization, or categorization under a common class of units—is realized. This applies to all branches of onomastics, especially to the main, most represented subsystem in language—the anthroponymic subsystem. It is organically integrated into the language system and follows its laws. At the same time, the onomastic subsystem has its specific features [6].

Based on the fact that common and proper names in language perform general functions: communicative and epistemological, common names often used for individualization can transition into the class of proper names and vice versa: proper names performing classification or generalization functions transition into the class of common names. Migration of names from one lexical category to another causes a change in the signified meaning, enabling their use in another context. The national specificity of proper names determines their non-equivalence, i.e., in most cases, they are untranslatable into other languages, showing high stability in linguistic transformations of text. Also,



the distribution of proper names by functional styles differs: there are no texts consisting entirely of proper names, but numerous text types consist entirely of common lexical units [1].

A common noun becomes a proper name when it is applied to denote a unique phenomenon, which allows it to stand out from other similar objects: “Milliy Tiklanish” (National Revival) – the name of a political party, Momiq (Fluffy) – the name of a cat, Iskandarkul – the name of a lake. In this case, proper names often retain part of the meaning of the common name. For example, without seeing the cat named Momiq, we can guess from its nickname that it has fluffy fur. Hence, there is a particular expressiveness in such proper names that have not completely lost their connection with common names. They serve as homonyms in relation to them.

A proper name becomes a common noun if it designates an entire class of similar phenomena (for example, weapons named after their inventors: Beshotar (Five-shot), Dumbula (Double-shot), Nagan). If a proper name (usually the name of a literary character, sometimes the name of a historical figure) is associated with certain typical features characteristic of a whole circle of people, such a proper name is used as an expressive designation of the bearer of these characteristic features: Afandi – a wise and clever person; Majididdin – an intriguer, unscrupulous bureaucrat. Some of these names have fully transitioned into the category of common nouns: “sakhovatpesha” (philanthropist) – a wealthy patron of the arts, “ustoz” (mentor) – an instructor, etc.

A particular group of proper names is made up of words that are names of varieties, brands, types of products: “Ravon” (Smooth), “Nexia” (car brands); “Kara-Kum,” “Urtok” (types of sweets), etc. These words also serve for distinguishing, but not individual items (like other proper names) but groups of items with distinct characteristics.

Sometimes proper names are used in the plural form. This happens when designating a group of people or objects with the same names, surnames, or designations (Sinfimizda uchta Karimovlar bor – there are three Karimovs in our class; Marhamatlar – the Marhamat district and city) or when referring to people in family relationships (the Vohidov brothers, the Salomov spouses, the Tolipov family). The plural form of proper nouns may also denote people sharing a common trait (Otabeklar, Kumushlar, Tamarahonimlar). In this case, proper names approach the meaning of common nouns.

Proper nouns can transition into the category of common nouns, acquiring generalized meaning typical of common nouns. This transition occurs through the transfer of the characteristics of one object to another based on their similarity or contiguity (metonymic transfer). For example, Polvon (a person distinguished by exceptional physical strength) becomes a polvon (a person with great physical strength and an athletic build); Rizamat (an Uzbek agronomist-breeder) becomes rizamat (a variety of vineyard named after breeder Rizamat Musamukhamedov).

The class of proper names is also replenished by common nouns: tarozi (a device) becomes Tarozi burji (constellation), burgut (an eagle) becomes Burgut (an eagle used as a name for a person or symbol of bravery), and so on. In such cases, common nouns transition into proper nouns due to the unique association or particular significance they attain when they are applied to an individual or distinct object.

The transformations between common and proper nouns reflect a dynamic language system that continuously adapts to meet the communicative and expressive needs of its speakers. Proper nouns, due to their unique associations, can become symbols, metaphors, or indicators of collective values, shaping the perception and cultural identity within a language community.

Additionally, many proper names, particularly in literature and oral tradition, acquire symbolic significance, extending beyond mere reference to an individual or place. Names like “Don Quixote,” “Romeo,” or “Mehrobdan Chayon” carry inherent cultural or emotional connotations that resonate within specific linguistic communities. This symbolic shift allows proper names to serve not only as identifiers but also as carriers of broader cultural, moral, or psychological meanings.

The migration from common nouns to proper nouns and vice versa, therefore, highlights how language functions as a living system. It reflects the adaptability and evolution of linguistic signs as they



respond to the needs of the society in which they exist. This interplay between the literal and symbolic use of names is a defining characteristic of language, emphasizing the dual role of names in representing both the individuality of specific entities and the universality of collective concepts.

In conclusion, the semantic evolution of common and proper nouns illustrates the fluid boundaries between generalization and particularization within language. By examining how and why names transition between these categories, we gain insight into the intricate mechanisms of meaning-making and the enduring capacity of language to reflect human thought, culture, and identity.

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